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DEFENSE FOR FATA, BEIN; NSC FOR BRAUN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BK](#)

SUBJECT: BOSNIA - RS OFFICIALS ON UPCOMING DEMONSTRATIONS

REF: SARAJEVO 347

Classified By: CDA Judith B. Cefkin. Reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

Summary

11. (C) During the course of February 25, senior RS government and law enforcement officials assured the Embassy that the Banja Luka Branch Office will be protected during planned demonstrations on February 26. RS Interior Minister Stanislav Cadjó told the Charge that the RS police will fulfill its Vienna Convention obligations to ensure the security of diplomatic offices. SNSD Secretary General Igor Radojčić, and the Chiefs of Staff to RS PM Milorad Dodik and Serb Presidency member Nebojsa Radmanović each guaranteed the absolute safety of the branch office and its staff. RS Police Director Uros Pena noted that although media estimates of 30-50,000 participants are likely exaggerated, the crowd will be sizable and probably number between 15-20,000. Pena noted that RS police met with organizing NGO SPONA to inform them of their responsibilities to ensure a peaceful demonstration. The Branch Office will be protected by sixty police officers, two armored cars, a Fire Brigade vehicle, twenty SWAT team members and thirty riot police. End Summary

MoI Cadjó Promises Branch Office Protection

12. (C) The Charge, February 25, telephoned RS Interior Minister Stanislav Cadjó to discuss RS Police preparedness in advance of demonstrations scheduled for Tuesday February 26 in Banja Luka. The Charge expressed concern that the RS police had difficulties protecting the Embassy Branch Office in Banja Luka during protests on February 21. The Charge informed Cadjó that the US office would remain closed on Tuesday for the demonstrations and reminded him that the Vienna Convention obliges the RS government to protect diplomatic facilities. The Charge noted that media reports of up to 30,000 demonstrators planning to attend the protests would require significant efforts to ensure appropriate levels of police preparedness.

13. (C) Cadjó asserted that the RS police would fulfill its legal obligation to ensure the security of people, diplomatic offices, institutions, religious objects, returnee communities "as it did last week." Cadjó stated that the RS police met with SPONA, the umbrella NGO organizing the

protest, February 25 to review their responsibilities as the organizers of the protest. Cadjo added that only unforeseen events could complicate the situation and invited the USG to share any concrete threat information. Cadjo said he knew of no plans for demonstrations outside Banja Luka, but the possibility of spontaneous demonstrations exists.

RS Political Leaders Predict Peaceful Demonstrations

14. (C) Emboff met with several RS government officials in Banja Luka to reiterate USG expectations that RS officials meet their obligations to ensure the safety of the Embassy Branch Office. Separately SNSD Secretary General Igor Radojcic, and the Chiefs of Staff to RS PM Milorad Dodik and Serb Presidency member Nebojsa Radmanovic's staff each guaranteed the absolute safety of the branch office and its staff during tomorrow's protests. RS officials stated that the roads leading to the Branch Office will be closed. Dodik's staffer said that protesters have been firmly warned that the February 26 protests are to be peaceful and that SPONA's chairperson has been notified that the protests should not lead to violence. Radojcic, Dodik and Radmanovic are all scheduled to address the demonstration.

RS Police Preparations

15. (SBU) RSO spoke to RS Police Director Uros Pena who gave assurances that police have been working around the clock to prepare for tomorrow's demonstration and have developed a comprehensive plan for the security and safety of diplomatic missions, religious institutions, private property and government institutions. Pena confirmed that RS police met with SPONA to inform them of their responsibilities to ensure a peaceful demonstration. SPONA has arranged for 150 event marshals who will be responsible for directing the demonstrators and communicating with police. SPONA also briefed RS Police on their plan for transporting demonstrators to the city routes and paths that they will take. Speakers have been asked to send a message that will promote order and peace and not to incite the crowd.

16. (SBU) Pena added that the RS Police has met with schools, university groups, and NGOs not affiliated with SPONA to notify them that violence will not be tolerated. Schools will be in session on Tuesday, so police expect many of the young students who engaged in violent activity on February 21 will not participate. The RS Police has established a demonstration command center consisting of senior and experienced officers. The CT and EOD units will be deployed along with plainclothes officers in the crowd. Police officers from towns near Banja Luka will be on hand as well as officers from Doboje and Bijeljina.

17. (SBU) Pena said that demonstration organizers are predicting 30-50,000 participants. Pena believed more realistic estimates place the potential totals at 15-20,000. Pena said participants will be older than the students who dominated previous demonstrations and expects the majority to be well behaved. He reiterated that the RS Police will be prepared for those who choose not to follow the message of order and peaceful demonstration. The Branch Office will be protected by sixty police officers, twenty SWAT team members, thirty riot police and two armored cars will block the main street in front of the office. All immediate access roads will have fencing and, at the Embassy's request, a Fire Brigade vehicle will be positioned next to the Branch Office in case of fire.

Comment

18. (C) Despite RS assurances, we have seen in last week's demonstrations, how quickly crowds can get out of control. The RS Police's response, should such a contingency arise tomorrow, will very telling as to their true intentions. End Comment.

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